



Hunting, Sport Shooting, Fishing, and Archery in Germany



This document provides information to all US Forces members (soldiers & civilians) interested in gun ownership, hunting, sport shooting, fishing, and archery while stationed in Germany.

Your Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Division (MWRD) provides various programs for off-duty activities. Among them are programs addressing hunting, sport shooting, fishing, and archery. Despite some rumors all these activities are possible and available to US Forces members stationed in Germany. This also includes ownership of privately owned firearms (POF), storing POF in your apartment/house, bringing POF over from CONUS or other duty stations, purchasing POF in Germany, etc. Certain steps need to be taken and certain prerequisites need to be fulfilled and your MWR stands ready to assist to make it happen for you.

There are many wonderful opportunities for US Forces personnel to go hunting and fishing in Germany and other European Countries. Hunters may seek game including Red Deer, Roe Deer, Wild Boar, Chamois, feathered game and a variety of others. Fishers will find several different trout, catfish, and pike along with many other fish in the waters of Germany and other European countries. Your MWR even organizes deep-sea fishing trips to the Baltic Sea and other areas. The main emphasis in our hunting and fishing courses is to learn German laws and traditions that are a bit different from the ways of hunting and fishing in the states. However, the training in safety, game identification, and overall procedures provides hunters and fishers with knowledge and abilities to become more well-rounded in outdoors knowledge than ever before. What you learn here will make you a better and more successful hunter or fisherman regardless of where the Army takes you.

Gun-Ownership in General: Acquisition and possession of Privately Owned Firearms (POF) by uniformed or civilian members of the US Forces in Germany is governed by the German Weapons Law (and US Forces Regulations). Keep in mind that the German Weapons Law, although applicable to US Forces personnel, is written from a German citizen's perspective. It does not take into consideration that some US Forces personnel may have owned POF for many years in the US. It assumes that at some point a German becomes interested in shooting and/or hunting and knows virtually nothing about firearms. **IMPORTANT:** Prior to bringing firearms into Germany you must check with us to avoid problems and to ensure all required permits have been obtained and all paperwork has been completed.

Hunting: In Germany hunting of certain animals (when in season) is perfectly legal. US Forces members interested in hunting are required to take a US Forces Hunting Course (in English) and pass the exam. The US Forces course is approved and recognized by the German Government. With the examination certificate the local German City Administration will issue a hunting license. Once this part is completed, US Forces members are eligible to register firearms with the US Forces and the German Weapon's Authorities. Upon proper registration US Forces members are generally permitted to keep the registered firearms in their apartments/houses and utilize them on ranges and while hunting. Hunting is only permitted if the hunting rights holder has given you permission to hunt in his area. There are many opportunities to hunt in various areas on various type of game, not just in Germany but also in other European countries. Since hunting involves firearms and ammunition, certain steps need to be taken and certain prerequisites need to be fulfilled and your MWR stands ready to assist to make it happen for you.

Sport Shooting: Germany has over 500,000 sport shooters organized through sport shooting clubs, which belong to various sport shooting associations. The US Forces in Germany play an active role in this environment. As of the year 2005, the US Forces have their very own sport shooting handbook, which has been approved by the German Federal Government. The membership in the US Forces Sport Shooting Program enables you to take the firearms test and to obtain the appropriate license to purchase, possess, and utilize firearms on proper sport shooting ranges. Many opportunities exist to take part in sport shooting competitions on local as well as European levels.

Fishing: Fishing in Germany requires both a fishing license and a fishing permit. The fishing license serves as proof that you know how to fish (we don't want to violate animal protection laws), how to identify fish (some species are in season, others are not), and how to identify fish diseases (that's important if you want to consume fish). Such a license is obtained by taking a US Forces fishing course (in English), passing the exam, and taking the examination certificate to your local German city administration. They will then issue you a fishing license. The US Forces Fishing Course is recognized and approved by the German Federal Government. The fishing permit can be obtained from the fishing rights holder of the particular lake or river you intend to fish in. Not having a permit from the fishing rights holder is considered poaching.

Archery: bows and cross-bows fall within the German Weapon's Law but are not considered firearms. No permits are needed and no prerequisites must be met in order to own and use bows or cross-bows. Hunting using bows or cross-bows is illegal in Germany. Your local Rod & Gun Clubs, Outdoor Recreation Centers, and German Clubs offer many opportunities to enjoy this sport.

More detailed information is available from your local Rod & Gun Club, Outdoor Recreation Center, this office, or the MWR Europe website.

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The following are the regulations that cover POF in Europe:

Army in Europe Regulation 190-6:
Registration and Control of Privately Owned Firearms and Other Weapons in Germany, 20 Jul 2006

Army in Europe Regulation 215-145:
Hunting, Fishing, and Sport Shooting in Germany, 01 Aug 2006

These regulations can be found at the USAREUR Publications website:
<https://www.aeaim.hqusareur.army.mil/library/>

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